

Politics: A major Conduit to Upward Social Mobility within Liberia the Liberian Society

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Abstract: From qualitative analysis, this article examines politics as the major conduit to social mobility in Liberia's social stratification system. It argues that none of the traditional determinants of social stratification (income, wealth, education, power, prestige) are strong enough to influence social mobility at the apex of the social ladder in Liberia.

Empirically, history has proven that majority of the elites arouse to the upper class through politics conceptualized as political positions characterized by elections and appointments.

This article also argues that politics is an independent variable that influences income, wealth, power, and prestige simply because of the lucrative salaries and incentives associated with political positions in Liberia. For this reason, it is argued that the desire of those entering into politics especially in contemporary Liberia is to acquire wealth, not necessarily to serve the best interest of the state.

Key words: Education, Income, Politics, Power, Prestige Social Mobility, Social Ladder, Social Stratification system, Wealth

I. INTRODUCTION

Every society is characterized by the trends of observed social phenomena. These phenomena that are fascinating include multifaceted social, economic, and political social facts integral to the existence of society. The Liberian society is replete with these multifaceted phenomena that continued to shape its direction.

One of the observed social phenomena is social mobility introduced by the Russian-born American sociologist and political activist Pitirim Sorokin. It connotes individuals' opportunities for progression within the social hierarchy (Nunn, Johnson, Monro, Bickerstaffe, Kelsey, 2007). Or, better put it, movement along the social ladder in society.

In most societies, there are certain determinants, or variables that influence the ability for people to climb the social ladder discuss subsequently. It includes; education, family background, occupation, social class, individual factor, income and wealth, power, etc.

In the context of the Liberian society, it is observed that unlike other societies, politics is the major determinant to social mobility.

Against this premise, this qualitative research meticulously explore how politics is used as the major conduit to upward social mobility in Liberia. Put simple, it explains how people advance to the apex of the social ladder through politics.

Mindful of how the Liberian society is highly polarized coupled with the kind of insinuation people make, or how people impute reasonings to issues, this article clarifies that the intent of the author is not to expose individuals in society. It is purposely an academic work that explains part of Liberia social stratification system necessary for students reading social sciences.

As the conceptual frameworks necessary for this kind of research, politics and social mobility, precisely upward mobility are the main emphasis.

II. CONTEXTUAL CLARIFICATIONS OF POLITICS

Most research of this kind requires contextual clarification that allow readers understand the context and background in which the author is writing from. There are several ways in which politics has been conceptualized. In the words of Robert A. Dahl (2003), politics may be defined by the use of power. Similarly, Niccolò Machiavelli, Thomas Hobbes, and Harold Lasswell defined politics as the use of power, irrespective of the ends being pursued (Morlino, 2017), (Atkinson, 2013).

For his part, Professor Christina Boswell (2020) conceptualized politics as a process of competitive claims-making by rival parties, with the aim of mobilising support to put these programmes into action.

The German Chancellor Bismarck defined politics as the art of government, the exercise of control within society through the making and enforcement of collective decisions.

From the above definitions of politics, it is safe to make the inference that they all border on the process in which a government runs the affairs of the state. For the purpose of clarity, a state of affairs denotes matters that the government of a country deals with. And so, to runs the affairs of the state, a government must have the power legitimized by normative framework, to runs the affairs of the state, a government must have the power to make collective decision in the interest of the states, to runs the affairs of the state, a government must have the power to mobilize support intended to put programmes into action, to runs the affairs of the state, a government must have the power to exercise control by way of enforcement necessary for the common good of the society.

As a concept, power used by a government to run the affairs of the state refers to the idea that a government's legitimacy and moral right to use state power is justified and lawful only

when consented to by the people or society over which that political power is exercised (Alexis de Tocqueville, 1835). Power as the crux of politics is legitimized by both international and national instruments. For example, Article 21 of the United Nations' 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that "*The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government*". Chapter one of Ghana's Constitution of 1992 with Amendments through 1996 states "*The Sovereignty of Ghana resides in the people of Ghana in whose name and for whose welfare the powers of government are to be exercised in the manner and within the limits laid down in this Constitution*".

It is this same power, a government used to appoint people into positions of trust so as to help administer the affairs of the state. Without individuals appointed into positions, a government will find it difficult to administer the affairs of the state.

In the context of Liberian politics, the conceptual clarifications of politics are applicable and apparent. For example, the current George Manneh Weah government derived its power to administer, or runs the state of affairs (Liberia) from Article 1 of the 1986 Constitution that states "*All power is inherent in the people. All free governments are instituted by their authority and for their benefit and they have the right to alter and reform the same when their safety and happiness so require. In order to ensure democratic government which responds to the wishes of the governed, the people shall have the right at such period, and in such manner as provided for under this Constitution, to cause their public servants to leave office and to fill vacancies by regular elections and appointments*".

To run the affairs of the state, Article 54 of the Liberian 1986 Constitution gives the government the power to appoint people into positions of trust. It clearly and succinctly states "*The President shall nominate and, with the consent of the Senate, appoint and commission:*

- Cabinet ministers, deputy and assistant ministers;
- Ambassadors, ministers and consuls
- the Chief Justice and Associate Justices of the Supreme Court and judges of subordinate courts;
- Superintendents, other county officials and officials of other political sub-divisions;
- Members of the military from the rank of lieutenant or its equivalent and above; and
- Marshals, deputy marshals and sheriffs.

To also run the affairs of the state, the same 1986 Liberian Constitution provides an election for president and lawmakers through the ballot box.

With this being said, politics, as used in the context of this article, is conceptualized as political positions by appointment and election for the sole purpose of running the affairs of Liberia as a state. Running the affairs of Liberia requires

making collective decisions as in policies, laws, executive orders, etc. believe to be in the best interest of Liberia.

In Liberian politics, those elected and appointed into positions of trust are paid lucrative salaries and other incentives. For example, members of the National legislature, precisely, the senate currently earn about \$9000,00 monthly coupled with other incentives a basic salary of L\$29,700 (US\$143). Multiply this amount by nine years for a Senator (Senkpeni, 2019). Using the same parity of reasoning that Representatives and Senators are co-equal for purposes of services rendered to the Republic for salaries, an individual Representative shall make a likely salary of \$5,999.99 or less per annum until the law is changed (Jensen, 2020)

Cabinet ministers and other political appointees such as Directors, Commissioners, diplomats, etc. serving at the will and pleasure of the President earn the minimum of \$3,500.00 monthly coupled with other incentives. Whether the figures are inaccurate, or incorrect, the fact remains that for Liberia economy, people don't have to engage into corruption to acquire wealth. Just by this earning depending on the length of time in position, it is enough to progress upwardly on the social pyramid.

III. THE CONCEPT OF SOCIAL MOBILITY

As a concept first introduced by Russian-born American sociologist and political activist Pitirim Sorokin in his book "Social and Cultural Mobility, social mobility is defined as shift in an individual's social status from one status to another. To better understand this concept, an illustration will be of great help.

Imagine that society is a ladder. The people at the bottom of the ladder are poor. The people at the top are rich, powerful, and famous.

So, when a person works hard to get promotions at work, make more money, and impress people, you can say that they are "climbing the social ladder". Thus, social mobility denotes the movement an individual or group from one social position to another over time on the social ladder. It explains the growing gap between the rich and the poor often referred to as economic inequality.

Social mobility is typical of every human society. It is an embodiment of every human society social stratification system that describes the socioeconomic levels of a society as "layers," with the wealthiest and most powerful citizens being at the top. Typically, the top layer of society tends to have lots of property, as well as prestige and social influence (Lumen, Boundless Sociology).

Social mobility occurs in both open class system and closed class system. According to Sorokin, that there is no society that is completely open (such as the class system) and no society that is completely closed (like the caste system in India). In a society with open system, people climb to the top of the social ladder through efforts. That is, they must work

hard to achieve that status. Whereas, in a society with a closed system, people climb to the top of the social ladder through ascribed means instead of hard work. For example, family background, ethnicity, gender, and religion, etc.

Types of Social Mobility

Social mobility can take different types, and people can experience different types of mobility in different stages of their lives. It includes, horizontal mobility, vertical mobility, upward mobility, downward mobility, Inter-generational mobility, and Intra-generational mobility. For the purpose of this article, upward social mobility is given attention.

Upward Social Mobility

As sociopolitical phenomenon, upward social mobility denotes moving from low social position to a higher one. It is how people in society climb from the bottom to the apex or top of the social ladder in society. When people advance to the top of the social ladder, changes in their lives styles and even behavior become so conspicuous. For example, modernized and decent residence, or house, expensive car, healthy habits, children attend very expensive schools, etc. This is not to prove that they are pride, it is just the way in which their lives are impacted by upward mobility.

IV. DESCRIPTION OF THE SOCIAL LADDER IN LIBERIA

Metaphorically, the social ladder that people climb depicts various positions beginning from the bottom to the top. For some, no matter how diligent they work, they will not advance or climb to the top. Some will progress from the bottom to the middle, to the top, and possibly some drop from the top to the middle and so on. For purpose of clarity, the below illustrations provide clear descriptions of the positions depicting the social ladder in Liberia.

The Underclass/Bottom of the Ladder:

Who are those positioned at the bottom of the social ladder? From observation, these people find it very difficult to eat and get a good education if any at all. They are the kind of people who live in slums with very poor hygiene. They make a living through begging, selling in a market, or doing odd jobs like wheelbarrow pushing or hawking etc.

The Working class position:

Who are these? These are the people who are a step away from the Underclass on the social ladder. They are shop assistants, plumbers, receptionists, drivers, low ranking security officers, tailors or clerical and most blue-collar workers whose work is highly routinized earning under \$ 200.00 United States dollars monthly. They make just enough to rent accommodation, although they might be sharing with others (often termed face-me-I-face-you). On average, most of their children attend public schools or affordable community low standard private schools. They are able to feed themselves 1 or 2 meals a day. A lot of their earnings go towards

transport, feeding, accommodation and have very little income for leisure. You regard them as just getting by. Usually, some have very limited education, up to secondary school level and tertiary education (mainly trade schools).

The Lower middle position: Who are these? They just above the working class, but could have links to the working class position on the social ladder. They include teachers, civil servant, petite-bourgeoisie, (small business owners), nurses, middle and senior security manager, tertiary or university instructors, bankers, tellers, Physician Assistants, etc. They live in slightly bigger houses, send their kids to slightly better private schools than the working class. Their children go to university but usually locally. In most instances, they do white-collars jobs that do not involve manual labor. I would say anyone that earns about \$1,500.00 United State dollars a month is within this position on the social ladder. They can afford food, housing, clothing quite comfortably and employ cook or house cleaner based upon Liberia standard. They tend to drive smaller cars and most often 4 runner jeeps and other affordable jeeps in Liberia. They have a bit of money for leisure, eating out, and very occasionally travel abroad etc. Members of this class must work hard to maintain their position on this part of the social pyramid of Liberia. Except for state security officers, members of this class appear to be politically conserved. Educationally, most of them obtained under-graduate degree and are pursuing Bachelor of Law degree and Master degrees that may influence their status to the upper-middle position on the social ladder.

The Upper middle position: Who are these? In Liberia, it could be argued that members of this position on the ladder are high-income business and professional people and their immediate families. Most of them have college educations and advanced degree. Their money build them decent large houses and cars by Liberia's standard. Their children attend very expensive private schools such as JJ Roberts, Levi Williams, Catholic Schools, Mary Lauren School of Excellence, private universities, state run university, they employ cook, house cleaner and driver as well. They have access to good quality private healthcare and sometimes seek on their own expense seek medical treatment abroad many in Ghana. It is observed that most of them are members of fraternities necessary to maintain their position on the social pyramid. They include but not limited to the professionals, such as accountants, engineers, lawyers, doctors, etc. Government officials in the rank and file of Assistant Ministers, Directors, Commissioners, etc. earning about \$4,000 United States dollars monthly.

The Lower-upper position: Who are these? Considered as one step away from the upper-middle position in Liberia social stratification system. They are people who have acquired wealth through their own effort, mainly through politics or political positions in government and business enterprise. Their wealth or socio-economic status cannot be compared to those in the upper position on the ladder. for example, George Kailando, the owner of Kailando business, Floyd

Tomah, that runs jungle water, James N. David & son that operate cement business, etc. may fall within this position on the social ladder. Moreover, majority members of the house of representatives, some members of the house of senate and even the Chief Justice and Associate Justices of the Supreme Court earning above \$10,000 United States dollar a month fall within this position. Top government officials including Cabinet Ministers and heads of corporate entities earning above \$5,000 United States dollars a month fall within this social class as well. Their children attend elite private schools such as America International School (AIS), Mary Lauren School of Excellent, etc. They also seek medical treatment abroad, mainly in India, Ghana that have the state of arts together.

The Upper-position: Who are these? In Liberia social stratification system, they are people who on the average acquired their wealth by virtue of their prolong stay in government positions. I would say recycle politicians in government that continue to make more money. They would most likely also own several homes abroad and locally, all fully paid for. Their children attend elite private schools such as America International School (AIS) and most often study abroad. They often spend their holiday or vacation outside Liberia mainly in the United States because of their residential status. Presumably, most of them are American citizens in disguise and obtained their education from the United States. Because of their wealth and residential status, they are usually the first to leave Liberia due to early warning conflict indicators. It is observed that most of their private investments came from the money they earned from their positions. Socio-politically, they are active evidenced by their power and influences often felt at the community and national level. Most often, they seek medical treatment outside Liberia and fly first class cabins. The President, Vice president, some members of the lower House and upper House, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, the Speaker of the House of Representative, President Pro-tempore, etc. For the purpose of clarity, President George Manneh Weah is the only person that arouse to this position through his soccer talent. However, the presidency now maintains him at this position on the social ladder.

V. DETERMINANTS FOR UPWARD SOCIAL MOBILITY

In most societies, people climb to the top of the social ladder through the following factors considered as the determinants or conduits. They are:

Education

In all human societies, it can be argued that the amount and kind of education people acquire affects their position they will secure on the social ladder. Thus, education is one of the main determinants or dimensions of upward social mobility. As an independent variable that influences income or wealth in society, it is measured by college and university credential or qualifications such as undergraduate, graduate and post

graduate degrees in diverse marketable fields and gate way to both political and corporate positions.

For example, in western countries, doctors occupy a valuable social position because they possess knowledge and skills that keep people healthy and support social stability. Moreover, doctors are also generally well paid and tend to accumulate wealth over the course of their lives, which is something else that many societies view favorably.

There exists a reciprocal relationship between social class and education. It means, to get a higher education one needs money. Upper-class children are more privileged to attend the finest schools and colleges in society and abroad comparable to lower- or middle-class children.

Family background

Research revealed that family background can play a vital role in upward mobility. For example, the current Prime Minister of Canada, Justin Trudeau, arose to this highly valuable social position in part because he was well-liked, but also because he had many important social and political connections and is the son of a popular political figure who served two terms as the Prime Minister in the late 1970's and early 80's. In this case, Trudeau's successful upward social mobility was possible in part due to his hard work, but also because of considerable social capital that came as the result of being from a well-known and well-respected political family (Study.com)

Talent

Similar to other societies, it is no doubt that talent remains as one of the determinants of social mobility in Liberia. Individuals with possession of natural abilities and skills in the Liberian society who have developed these abilities to a high extent managed to climb to the top of the social ladder. Liberians because of their talent in football have travelled wide to continents of the world to play football and have accumulated wealth by virtue of their development of exceptional skills. For example, prior to his presidency, George Manneh Weah that came from very poor background and slum community has gotten international recognition and have grown to the upper class in the Liberia stratification system. Similarly, former professional soccer players like James Salinsa Debbah, Kelvin Sebwe, Jonathan Boy Charles Sogbie, Christopher Wleh, at a given time arose to the upper class in Liberia stratification system because of exceptional soccer talents. Another person is Kanvee Adams a renowned gospel singer rated one of the richest and most influential with a net worth of about \$700,000 dollars. (Keninfo, 2019)

Ethnicity

in the words of Thomas (1990) that is still valid today, Ethnicity is defined as a set of cultural characteristics that set one group apart from another group. People who share a common cultural background and a common sense of identity are categorized as ethnic group. These cultural characteristics

include language, religion, national origin, custom, values, tradition, food, music, etc. as their way of life, Nebo (2019).

In Liberia, ethnicity finds its position in social mobility. Historically, it has been used as the basis for social inequality also defined as ethnic stratification.

For example, the 133 years hegemony stratified the elites Americo-Liberian ethnic group at the apex of the socio-political ladder, while the indigenous Liberians branded by the Americo-Liberians as “country people” comprised of diverse ethnic groups were predominantly stratified at the bottom of the socio-political ladders. Even now, some of the children of the elites Americo-Liberians are still positioned around the parameters of the socioeconomic ladder. The elites Americo-Liberians institutionalized discriminatory practices that denied citizenship to indigenous Liberians until 1904, denied full voting rights until 1946, one-party oligarchic rule and lack of property rights restricted to property owners or those who paid a hut tax, (refworld 2007). All of these practices institutionalized by the elite Americo-Liberians comprised of 2.5% of the population confined the indigenous ethnic group that constitute 95% of the population at the bottom of the socio-political and economic ladder.

Following the 1980 military coup that ended the elites Americo-Liberians hegemony, the Liberian society again witnessed another shift in ethnic stratification. From 1980-1990, the elites Krahn ethnic group in control of the body politics climbed the top of the socioeconomic ladder at the expense of other indigenous ethnic groups especially the Gio and Mano ethnic tribes considered as their revival. Considered as one of the factors that influenced the 14 years civil war, it can be argued that the Liberian society is mindful of ethnicity as a determinant for social mobility. This is evidenced by the Charles Taylor regime, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf regime and currently the George Weah regime that reflected ethnic balance or representation. However, it can still be argued that ethnicity is still a factor that influence social mobility in Liberia. For example, while it is true that the current George Manneh Weah administration reflects ethnic balance, the same is also true that majority of the top cabinet positions and other appointments are occupied by his kinsmen or members of the kwa ethnic group from where the President came from.

Power

As an independent variable, power refers to the degree to which individuals or groups can impose their will on others, with or without the consent of those others. According to Tanimu (1953), how much power an individual has is a function of his placement on the radar of stratification, this power could be economic, political or religious. For example, just like other societies, the president is the most stratified person in Liberia. In Liberia, power is guarded by law and tradition, provides wider access to social wealth, and possibility to make decisions which are most essential to the society, laws for the benefit of the higher class being among them. People possessing power (political, economic or

religious) constitute the elite or the upper class of the Liberian society. According to Thomas (1990) that is also applicable to the Liberian society, power can be based on force, possession of special skills or type of knowledge. For example, whether legal, justifiable or unjustifiable often debatable, the constitution grants upon the President to instruct the police to use appropriate force to restore and maintain law and order during civil disobedience in any part of Liberia. When it comes to knowledge, it is widely accepted in the Liberian society that knowledge is power. Politicians rely on their knowledge to get the consent of their followers through manipulation or persuasion to engage into political behavior such as protest, demonstration rallies, etc.

Politically in Liberia, people acquired power by elections and appointments. For example, President, Vice President, Senators and Representatives are elected into offices. Chief Justice and associates Justices, cabinet Ministers are appointed by the president. Besides the President that is highly stratified at the apex of political power, the rest of these people to some extents are also stratified on the ladder of political power. Economically, top business torchons as in sole proprietor also exercise power over employees only. Religiously, Bishops, senior clergy man, pastors also exercise power over their congregation as well. In conclusion, People possessing power (political, economic or religious) constitute the elite or the upper class of the Liberian society.

Wealth

Closely connected to power, this article agreed with Sociologist Thomas assertion that wealth is the most obvious dimension of upward social mobility. It refers to material possessions defined as valuable in Liberia. It includes income earned through salaries and wages, property, land, assets, farm etc. In Liberia, depending on the generation, wealth can be inherited. For example, the Tubman family, Tolbert Family, Urey family, Charles Taylor family, Samuel K. Doe family. Research is yet to establish whether these people inherited their wealth from their parents or ancestors. What is certain is that the wealth their children now enjoy came from their political positions. In Liberia, it is no doubt that wealth is concentrated overwhelmingly in the hands of a minority of the population. This is evidenced by the unequal distribution of income in Liberia. For example, while a majority of Liberians live on less than \$2 per day evidenced by the country’s 54.1% poverty rate, members of the National Legislature are reportedly earning about \$10,000 per month including other monetary benefits, Kazeem (2018). Cabinets are reportedly earning not more than US\$ 4000 as monthly salary including other incentives. Applicable to Liberia, Sociologist Paul Blumberg argued that top corporate executives make 100 times as much money as the lowest paid production workers. In the private sector in Liberia, it can be argued that top corporate executives earn slightly above Cabinet Ministers not too distance from lawmakers.

VI. POLITICS AS THE MAJOR CONDUIT TO UPWARD SOCIAL MOBILITY IN LIBERIA

This segment of the article explains how politics is used as the major conduit to upward social mobility in Liberia.

As a premise, all of the above determinants of upward social mobility except talents are influenced by politics in Liberia. Let it be borne in mind that as conceptualized in this article, politics denotes political positions occupied in government whether appointed or elected due to party membership or affiliation.

Historically, it has been observed that politics is the major conduit to upward social mobility in Liberia social stratification system. The main reason stems from not only the lucrative salaries and incentives, but also power connection and influence. Even though, this article cannot provide factual information pertaining to the actual salaries and incentives politicians, cabinets, lawmakers, judges, etc., were earning before the civil war. However, the fact remains that majority of these people most of whom were the elites Americo-Liberians arose to the apex of the social ladder through the positions they occupied in the body politics of Liberia for 133 years.

In contemporary time especially post -conflict Liberia, it is no doubt that politics as a concept and variable, has become the major conduit to upward social mobility. Carefully ponder on Prof. PLO – Lumumba who bluntly intimated that the easy way to get wealth without working hard is to join African politics (Lumumba 2020). Though Prof. PLO-Lumumba spoke in the context of corruption. However, his assertion can also be applied to certain lucrative political positions in African politics. It is these lucrative positions that attract people attention to join active politics. Like parliament, Cabinet, Ministers, President, Directors, Commissioners, etc. are very lucrative position in African politics. Take the case of Liberia in which the National Legislature earning about \$9000,00 monthly coupled with other incentives a basic salary of L\$29,700 (US\$143). Multiply this amount by nine years for a Senator. (Senkpeni, 2019). Using the same parity of reasoning that Representatives and Senators are co-equal for purposes of services rendered to the Republic for salaries, an individual Representative shall make a likely salary of \$5,999.99 or less per annum until the law is changed (Jensen,2020); cabinets earning about \$4,000 monthly, etc.

One may argue that the figures or salaries are not exact, understated, or questionable, granted. However, the facts of these lucrative positions cannot be denied. Moreover, for Liberia economy, salaries per annum from these lucrative positions are enough to influence wealth, education, and prestige needed to climb the social ladder. Today, look around Liberia. Almost all of the people who are sitting at the apex of the social ladder got there through politics. They were positioned either at the bottom, or middle of the social ladder. They did not reach the top of the social ladder because of their education, or family background. It is through their political

affiliation or connection as partisans. For some professional reasons, this article cannot pinpoint those that arose to the top of the social ladder by mean of politics. Arguably, without political connection, their education acquired, or family background in no way could have influenced their upward social mobility. In other words, the wealth and prestige they are not enjoying did not come from their education, family background, or talent. It came from politics.

This is not in any way for you to insinuate that the author of this article is harboring envy. It is just an observable sociopolitical phenomenon. It is an enlightenment pertaining to the sociology of the Liberian society.

In some instances, people arose to the peak of the social ladder without education. Through politics, and perhaps to avoid embarrassment, or silent their critics, they managed to obtain university education. This is one of the reasons why politics as also conceptualized in this article, is considered as an independent variable. This is simply because, it influences education, wealth, prestige and even power of most Liberian politicians.

VII. CONCLUSION

From the exploration of upward social mobility in Liberia context, this article finally concludes on the following:

Education, family background, ethnicity, power, talent, as key determinants of upward social mobility in Liberia social stratification system are strong not enough to influence people upward social mobility. Empirical evidence based on observation established that political connection through party has been and is now the key determinant that influence upward social mobility.

For some people that have strong political connections base on party membership, or affiliation, education serves as the advantage for upward mobility, while for others without political connection may find it difficult to progress on the social ladder. Since the foundation of the Liberian society till now, it is safe to conclude that all of the few people most of whom are politicians in the lower upper position and upper position got their wealth from politics. Even most of the people especially those in lower top government position in the upper-middle position progress because of the same political connection.

Premise on the fact that upward social mobility is influenced by politics as the main or major conduit, it will continue to attract more political aspirants that may have serious implications for our democracy. Arguably, people are not joining active politics because of the desire to positively impact the Liberian society. It is only pursued as the gate way to wealth, power, prestige. This is evidenced by the continuous outcries by Liberians that politicians are not seeking the interest of the country, rather their own personal agenda, or interest.

Finally, this article is not suggesting that in order to climb to the top of the social ladder, one must join active politics. It is not possible that everybody must climb the social ladder through active politics. However, it is just to tell you how the Liberian society is also structured.

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